A BRIEF

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE and DEATH

OF

RICHARD VARLEY,

Who was executed at *York*, ſome Time ago.

CONTAINING

His CONVERSION,

While under Sentence of Death, in *York* Caſtle.

To which is Added,

A remarkable LETTER wrote, by him to ſome Chriſtian People, in *York*; with another LETTER from them, giving their Sentiments of his Converſion.

LIKEWISE,

A WORD of ADVICE given to young People; and a LETTER which he ſent to his WIFE on the Day of his Execution.

All which was delivered by him to his FATHER at the Place of Execution.

To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteouſneſs, Rom. iv, 5.

It is GOD *that juſtifieth, Who is he that condemneth?* Rom. viii. 33, 34.

Newcaſtle Printed in this Preſent YEAR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Account is printed from the Original, which was delivered by the Prisoner to his Father at the Place of Execution,

A Word to the READER by Way of *PREFACE*.

READER,

IF thou never experienced what real Chriſtianity is, namely, *The Power of God to Salvation to every one that believeth*, it is likely thou wilt give little Credit to the Account here given of the Converſion of a wicked Sinner, by the free Mercy of God in Chriſt, a few Days before his Death But if God has by his bleſſed Spirit opened thine Eyes to ſee the Goſpel Method of Salvation as it is plainly laid down in Scripture, particulary in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, thou wilt not wonder at God's ſometimes calling a Sinner in the Manner and Circumſtances here related. By Grace it is that we muſt all be ſaved through Faith, and this Faith is not of ourſelves, it is the Gift of God, not of Works, leſt any Man ſhould boaſt; for we are his Workmanſhip, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good Works, which God has before prepared that we ſhould walk in them. Indeed if this was not the Caſe if we were to be juſtified by our Works in the Sight of God, the following Relation of *Richard Varley*'s Converſion would be quite abſurd, and impoſſible to be true. But as St. *Paul* expreſſly tells us, *that we are juſtified or pardoned through a living Faith in the Blood of*

Christ, applied to the Soul by the Spirit of God; there is no Reason for thee, if thou believes the *New Testament* to be the Word of God, to doubt of the Truth of the following Account. Because whenever this Divine Faith, which is the Gift of God, shall be given, the Sinner is immediately forgiven all his Sins, born again of the Spirit of God, and adopted into the Number of his Children. Being justified by Faith he has then Peace with God through JESUS CHRIST; and if he gives up himself to the Guidance of God's Spirit which is then given him, God will surely sanctify him throughout before he leaves this World, however short Time he may have before he departs out of it. However let not the Conversion of this Man at the eleventh Hour, a few Days before his Death, cause thee to defer thy Repentance and calling upon God for Pardon and Justification, if thou art not yet one of his Children; for though Repentance and Remission of Sins is the free Gift of God through the Merits of his Son, yet remember that if thou continues to resist the Grace he has already given thee, thou hast no Reason, ordinarily, to expect that thou shall ever be brought into his Favour, or save thy Soul from everlasting destruction. Work out therefore thy Salvation with Fear and Trembling, for it's God that worketh in thee to will and do of his good Pleasure.

A BRIEF

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE and DEATH OF *RICHARD VARLEY.*

I WAS born in the Month of *April*, in the Year 1727, at *Lanſhea-bridge*, in the Pariſh of *Colne*, in *Lancaſhire*. When I grew up, tho' a Child, I was always fond of Play and Wandering: But when I came to be fit for Buſineſs, my Father, who was a Shalloon Weaver, thought of learning me that Trade, and accordingly I began to learn that Buſineſs with him. I was then about 11 Years of Age. I was very diſobedient to my dear Parents and careleſs about my Work; and in ſuch a Manner of Diſobedience and Careleſſneſs I continued till I left my Father's Houſe. My diſobeying my Father, and quarrelling with him about ſome Matters, made me, like an unnatural and undutiful Son leave him, and went into *Keighley* Pariſh, intending to work at my Trade. I ſtaid there about a Week,

and then returned Home to my Father, and ſtaid about a Year, and then hearing they were inliſting Men for Soldiers, I went to *Colne*, and inliſted myſelf into the *Coldſtream* Regiment of guards then laying at *London*, my Father not knowing of it.

We ſtaid here a little Time, and then went to *London* to join the above Regiment. Here began the Scene of all my Sorrows; for now having the Character of a Soldier, and getting on a red Coat, I thought myſelf a compleat Man, though I was not quite arrived at the Age of 18 Years. I find Man may be rotten before he's ripe. Indeed what could I have expected better, ſeeing my Diſobedience had rendered me odious to God, who might very juſtly leave me, And alſo I might reaſonably expect my Parents to do the ſame, though I have ſince found both more kind to me than I deſerved at their Hands. I pray God this may be a Warning to all young Men, that they may learn an early Obedience to God and their Parents.

I was now a Soldier, and, like the reſt of that unhappy Set of Men, thought, of little elſe but eating, drinking, and ſwearing, and imagined, as moſt of them do, that this behaviour was quite becoming a Soldier, not conſidering that the beſt Chriſtians muſt neceſſarily make the beſt Soldiers. From theſe former Crimes, I naturally fell into another Evil too common among the Army; I mean that all whoredom: and then, no doubt, but I was accounted by my Comrades a good Soldier, becauſe I was given up to all Kinds of Wickedneſs.

I continued in this State for the Space of two Years, following that Time falſely called Pleaſure. At length I fix'd my Mind on a Woman that was

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lowed and asked me how far I was going. I said for the North of *England*. He said, I am going to *Barnet*, about ten Miles from *London*, and shall be glad of your Company. As we walked together, we fell into Discourse, and agreed to rob on the Highway. But one Difficulty was, we had no Pistols. However being both stout Fellows we were determined to get Hedge-stakes, and if those we attacked would not deliver their Money, we would knock them down. Thus we entered the List of Highwaymen. But all the Way till we come to *Staffordshire*, we did not meet with any Booty; and having spent all our Money, we agreed to part, and I again ventured Home to my Father's. This was our first Meeting.

Being afraid of being discovered as a Deserter, I went away as before related. At this Time being in Want, and happening to meet with some Christian People, called *Methodists*, (as Satan can change himself into an Angel of Light, so I pretended to be one of their Number) I told them that I had been a long Journey, had no Business, *&c.* and, by thus telling my melancholy Tale, they were moved with Compassion and took me in, using me very well that Night; and as Mr. *Ingham* preached at Mr. *Batty*'s, to keep up my Character I went to hear him: Upon this they took me for a Christian; but, alas! were sadly deceived in me, for I was no Christian, nor had any real Concern about saving my Soul. Thus such as me cause the Enemies of God to blaspheme; but there will always be some Hypocrites among the sincere People of God, and, I pray God, that none may think the Worse of Religion upon my Account. Good People, it is true, may easily be imposed upon by such a Wretch as I was; but

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let not this harden their Hearts against those who are sincere: Though there are many Hypocrites, there are many real Christians in the World; and, blessed be God, he has made me the unworthiest of all Sinners, experience what true Christianity is, namely, *the Power of God to Salvation, through a living Faith in his Son* JESUS CHRIST, *who came into the World to save the vilest of Sinners.*

I must now draw to a Conclusion. At *Longpreston* I happened to meet, a second Time, my Companion *David Evans*, as before related: As soon as I saw him, I asked him how he did; he answered Very well; but you have got the Advantage of me, for I do not know you: No, said I, not know me, have you forgot your old Companion that came from *London* with you: He answered, I did not know you before you told me who you were, but am glad to see you; pray where are you going? I said, I was going to *Carleton*, near *Skipton*: But, says he, must not we go and drink together. I said, Yes, but I have no Money. Never mind that, says *Evans* for I have Money, and, if you will join my Company, you shall not want,—feel—what I have got in my Pocket: I felt, and found two Pistols We then agreed to go together, and went to *Lancaster* from thence to *Kendal*, in *Westmoreland*, and eight Miles beyond this we robbed a Man of Nine Shillings some halfpence, and his Horse. As we travelled through *Yorkshire* we committed the fatal Robbery for which my Companion has, and I am to suffer Death. The Fact was thus; we robbed a Miller of a very small Matter, and my Companion stole a Mare out of a Stable; for this we were apprehended at *Newcastle under Line*, in *Staffordshire* and sent to *Stafford* Goal; but were removed to

York

York Castle in *March*, 1756. My Companion was try'd a few Days after he came; but I being taken ill of a Fever on the Road, my Tryal was put off till the following Assize, when I was cast, and received Sentence of Death with five more, four of which are reprieved, and I and an unhappy young Man, *Richard Holdsworth*, were ordered for Execution.

I now saw how wretchedly I was deceived; as I expected to die, I endeavoured to prepare for Death by a diligent Attendance at Chapel, and I thought with as much Sincerity as any one could, thinking this to be the only Way to make Satisfaction for my Sins. But, oh! the Mercy and Love of God to a poor Wretch like me!

After my Condemnation my Father attended me, and God opened my Eyes, by his Means, to see that I could make no Satisfaction for breaking God's holy and perfect Laws.

My Father said to me, *You have spoke much of your Repentance and good Hope; I acknowledge it is good to repent, but I find by your Talk that you have not got a Pardon for your Sins. I think you are like a Man that goes into a Shop and runs into Debt for a Parcel of Goods, but comes again, and only pays for what he then buys. You know this does not pay off the old Debt; so though you repent now of Sin, and live better than you have done, yet the old Debt stands out against you. You must therefore have a free Pardon for all your Sins, as it is impossible for you to pay the Debt yourself which you have contracted.* Upon which I cried out, *O Lord, what have I been doing?* and from that Hour I began to be convinced of Unbelief, and found all my Sins standing out against me. This was on

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the *Saturday* after the Judges had left the Town the Day I expected to have been executed. Upon this, I cried out, *Good Lord, what muſt I have done if I had been executed To-day?* Surely I muſt have been ſent to Hell, though I before hoped not. Here I cannot help remarking ſome ſingular Providences of the Lord to me. It pleaſed him by afflicting me with Sickneſs, to ſpare me till another Aſſize. Oh! what a Mercy it was. I was not try'd and condemned at *Stafford*, when no one might have cared for my Soul, but was removed to *York*, where my Father became acquainted with a Congregation of *Methodiſts*, whoſe frequent Meeting gave them an Opportunity to pray for me almoſt daily; and I believe God heard their Prayers on my Behalf.

I bleſs God who made our Father as a Preacher to me, for when I ſaw myſelf naked and deſtitute, and knew not what to do, then he pointed out to me the Righteouſneſs of CHRIST to cover me and hid me from the Anger of the Almighty, and the Blood of CHRIST to atone for me. I felt a Hope that this would be my State, but my Father begged of me not to content myſelf with a bare Hope, and I was made to Wreſtle with God in prayer, and continued ſo ſtill *Sunday*. At the Time of Prayer I was reading the Life of *Nicholas Mooney*, and the Lord then let me feel that he had granted me Repentance and Remiſſion of my Sins. I then felt I was ready to die, that the Sting of Death, the Fear of Hell was taken away, and I had the Peace of God in my Heart. O what cannot God do for poor Sinners! for when I found my State to be full of Miſery, and was ſure I had done nothing towards ſaving my Soul,

Soul, the Lord directed me to obtain his Mercy freely.

From this Time I was happy, and my Happiness increased. Upon this I sent a Letter by my Father to let the Congregation know what God had done for my Soul, and to desire that they would Wrestle with God in Prayer, that he might strengthen this Faith, and confirm this Hope, in my Soul unto the End.

The Letter is as follows:

August 24.

From the Condemned-room in York *Castle.*

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

SINCE the Lord has been pleased to visit me under my present Confinement, and in my dark Cell to break into my Soul with his heavenly Light, I think in my Duty to inform you of what God has done for my Soul.

On *Saturday* next I expect to finish my mortal Life; but blessed and for ever blessed be the Lord God, who has forgiven me my Sins! Oh! how does my Heart rejoice to think the Time is so near when I am to be delivered out of the Miseries of this sinful World; but I am more than glad when I think that I shall have no more Misery in the World to come, but go to him who has redeemed me. At present I find my Heart filled with Peace from the Sense of having obtained Remission of Sin. Oh! what a Mercy that the worst and vilest of Sinners should find the Mercy of God when justly condemn'd to die by an earthly Judge! But, blessed be the Lord for

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free Grace, I am now ready to meet my God. Though my Sins have been many, God, for Christ's Sake, hath forgiven them all, and he fills my Soul with Peace. I desire you will remember me at the Throne of Grace, and pray that this Faith may be strengthned, and this Hope confirmed in my Soul, to the End.

I have done all that I can to get a Preacher, or some of YOU to come to me, but they will not allow it; yet they cannot hinder your Prayers going up to God for my Soul. Oh! it is a hard Thing not to suffer a poor Prisoner to get Good by spiritual Instructions; but, God be praised, my dear Father has attended me diligently, and God has blessed his Instructions to me, and the reading the Life of *Nicholas Mooney*, has, through Grace done me great Good.

I remain,

Your unworthy, dying, but loving Brother,

RICHARD VARLEY.

The following Letter was wrote by one of his Friends in an Answer to the above:

York, August 25, 1756

My dear Friend,

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IT is with much Satisfaction that I and many of our Brethren in this City have received the agreeable Account of your being reconciled to God, through the precious Blood of our dear Lord Jesus. Your Father gave it us from his own Mouth; and according to what he says, we find no Cause to dispute your real Conversion; to be sure

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